UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ NATO jets hit airstrip in Serb-held Croatia after Security Council expands authorization for use of air power in support of UNPROFOR; Special Representative Akashi says action was necessary and proportionate response to Serb attacks against Bihac safe area.

+ Security Council endorses results of Mozambican elections after Special Representative Ajello declares electoral process free and fair; calls on all parties to continue to work for national reconciliation on basis of democratic principles.

+ Security Council welcomes signing of Lusaka Protocol by Angolan Government and UNITA; voices concern at reports of continuing fighting in Angola, and reminds parties of obligation to respect cease-fire.

+ Secretary-General suggests creation of United Nations peace-keeping operation to establish security in Rwandese refugee camps; stresses need for parallel efforts towards national reconciliation in Rwanda, including repatriation and resettlement of refugees.

+ Secretary-General begins official visit to Italy after opening Naples Conference on Organized Transnational Crime.

+ General Assembly begins discussions on Secretary-General's Agenda for Development; adds new item on support for new or restored democracies to current agenda.

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The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) today conducted a limited air strike to render the Udbina airstrip in Serb-controlled Croatia inoperable. Special Representative Yasushi Akashi described that action as a necessary and proportionate response to the continued use of the airstrip for air raids against the Bihac safe area in neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina. Those raids involved the use of napalm and cluster bombs, and endangered not only civilians but United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) personnel. He noted that NATO had targeted the airstrip at Ubdina, and not the aircraft operating from it, in order to limit collateral damage and casualties.

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On Saturday, the Security Council authorized Member States to use air power, in a national capacity or within regional arrangements, to support UNPROFOR in Croatia. It took that action, under Chapter VII of the Charter, by unanimously adopting resolution 958 (1994). The Council thus expanded the authorization given to Member States under resolution 836 (1993) to use air power, under its authority and subject to close coordination with the Secretary-General and UNPROFOR, in and around the safe areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In a second meeting on Saturday, the Council condemned violations of the international border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. By unanimously adopting resolution 959 (1994), it demanded that all parties, particularly the "so-called Krajina Serbs", fully respect the border and refrain from all hostile acts across it. The Council fully supported UNPROFOR's efforts to ensure implementation of its resolutions on safe areas and demanded that all parties end hostile actions in and around those areas.

The Council asked the Secretary-General to update his recommendations on implementing the concept of safe areas and to encourage UNPROFOR to achieve agreements on their strengthening in cooperation with the Bosnian parties. It also recalled its 13 November request to him to report on further measures to stabilize the situation in and around the Bihac safe area. The Council asked the Secretary-General and UNPROFOR to intensify efforts to reach an agreement with the Bosnian parties on the demilitarization of Sarajevo and to report on the implementation of resolution 959 (1994) by 1 December.

In a statement by its President, Madeleine Albright (United States), on Friday night, the Council condemned the bombing of Bihac that day by aircraft belonging to the so-called Krajina Serb forces. That attack, which involved the use of napalm and cluster bombs, violated the Bihac safe area, and was made more grave because of the threat it posed to UNPROFOR troops there. The Council also condemned shelling by the Krajina Serbs from the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) as a flagrant violation of the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of relevant resolutions.

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The Security Council today endorsed the results of the recent Mozambican elections, after Special Representative Aldo Ajello declared the electoral process free and fair. It called on all parties to stand by their obligation to accept and fully abide by the results. It also called on them to continue the process of national reconciliation based, as provided for in the General Peace Agreement, on a system of multi-party democracy and the observance of democratic principles which would ensure lasting peace and political stability. The Council took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 960 (1994).

In a statement issued on Saturday, Mr. Ajello said the entire electoral process had been characterized by impartiality, dedication and professionalism on the part of the authorities. While there had been some irregularities and

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disruptions, there had been no event or series of events which could affect the overall credibility of the elections. President Joaquim Chissano won the presidential election with 53 per cent of the vote.

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The Security Council today welcomed the signing of the Lusaka Protocol by the Government of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in the Zambian capital yesterday. In a statement by its President, Madeleine Albright (United States), the Council said the Protocol and the Bicesse Accords should lay the foundation for lasting peace in Angola. It said the parties must continue to demonstrate their commitment to peace through the full and timely implementation of the peace agreement.

The Council noted with concern reports that the fighting in Angola was continuing. It reminded the parties that they must fully respect the cease-fire which was to go into effect tomorrow. The Council said it was looking forward to a report from the Secretary-General that the cease-fire had become effective, thereby allowing the deployment of United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) military and police observers to reinforce the Organization's monitoring capabilities in the country.

Welcoming the signing of the Protocol, the Secretary-General said that the United Nations would be ready to start deploying UNAVEM II observers to former combat zones as soon as the cease-fire was effective. It would also begin implementation of provisions of Security Council resolution 952 (1994) concerning enlargement of the Mission.

The Secretary-General paid tribute to Special Representative Alioune Blondin Beye for his efforts in the search for peace in Angola. He also expressed his gratitude to the representatives of the three observer States -- the United States, Portugal and the Russian Federation -- and to the Presidents of the countries of the region who had made a significant contribution to the peace process. He went on to call on the international community to help the Angolan people achieve national reconciliation, reconstruction and development.

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The international community must make a determined effort to improve security in Rwandese refugee camps, especially those in Zaire, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report to the Security Council dated 18 November, he identified three major military options for tackling the problem: a United Nations operation, set up in accordance with normal procedures, to establish security progressively in the camps; a United Nations force, set up under Chapter VII of the Charter, to separate former political leaders and military personnel from ordinary refugees; or a multinational force, authorized under Chapter VII but not under United Nations command, to carry out the same functions.

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The peace-keeping operation might be the most realistic way of improving security in the camps, the Secretary-General continued. However, it would be a difficult, complex and, to some extent, unprecedented enterprise. Member States would have to provide the necessary human, financial and logistical resources in a timely manner for it to be effective. He warned that any operation conducted without parallel efforts towards national reconciliation in Rwanda would be futile, and could even lead to an intensification of extremist activities in the camps. National reconciliation would require a political understanding between the former leadership and the present Government, and the establishment of conditions conducive to the return of refugees. Any operation that encouraged the repatriation of refugees who could not return to their home communities would merely add to the number of internally displaced persons in Rwanda.

Meanwhile, the Secretary-General said he would concentrate all United Nations efforts on establishing secure conditions in the camps in Zaire and on providing financial and technical assistance to the Government in Rwanda. Once progress had been made on those two fronts, he would work with the Organization of African (OAU) to address the wider problems of the subregion.

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The Secretary-General was in Naples today, where he opened the World Ministerial Conference on Organized Transnational Crime. In his address, he said United Nations activities to control organized crime should be conceived in the broadest possible terms. They should strengthen economies and political institutions, promote economic and social development, and encourage democratic institutions and practices. One of the best ways of preventing transnational crime was to contribute to the development of countries experiencing economic difficulties and to introduce transparency in their political and social life, he concluded.

The Secretary-General later travelled to Rome, where he began an official visit to Italy. During his visit, he will have meetings with President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, address a special session of the Italian Senate, and attend a seminar on the role of the United Nations in peace and development.

On Friday, the Secretary-General will leave Italy for visits to Algeria and Morocco. He will meet with the POLISARIO (Front populaire pour la libération de Saguia el-Hamra et du Rio de Oro) leadership in Tindouf, and will visit Laayoune, where the headquarters of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) is located. While in the area, he will hold talks with the parties concerned on the progress achieved in the voter identification process and on how best to proceed with implementation of the settlement plan.

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The General Assembly today began high-level consideration of the Secretary-General's report containing recommendations for "An Agenda for Development". Opening the debate, Assembly President Amara Essy (Côte d'Ivoire) stressed the importance of the link between disarmament and development. He supported the convening of an international conference on the financing of development in cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions.

Clement Rohee, Senior Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guyana, speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Suriname, called for better coordination of global economic and development policies in the United Nations system. He also advocated firm decisions on issues affecting trade, debt, finance and technology, and the establishment of a high-level inter-agency working group on external debt.

The establishment of a General Assembly working group to consider the Secretary-General's recommendations on "An Agenda for Development" was supported by the representatives of Germany (on behalf of the European Union) and Algeria (on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China). the outcome of the working group's consideration could be adopted on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Also today, acting on recommendations of its General Committee, the Assembly decided to include in the current agenda an additional item entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of governments to promote or consolidate new or restored democracies". It decided that the item would be considered directly in plenary.

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